REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 77-115, including independent claims 77 and 98, are pending in the present application. Independent claim 77, for instance, is directed to a method for forming an elastomeric glove. The method comprises dipping a hand-shaped former into at least one bath containing an elastomeric material to form a substrate body. A hydrogel coating is applied to the outer surface of the substrate body while the inner surface of the substrate body remains adjacent to the hand-shaped former. The hydrogel coating has a thickness of from about 0.1 to about 20 micrometers. A lubricant coating is also applied to the hydrogel-coated substrate body that comprises a silicone emulsion. Thereafter, the glove is stripped from the hand-shaped former without the use of an antiblocking powder. The glove is inverted so that the outer surface of the substrate body is configured to face a user's hand when inserted into a hand-shaped cavity.

In the Office Action, previous independent claims 38, 55, and 65 were rejected under *35 U.S.C. §103(a)* over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0096686 to Teoh, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,284,607 to Chen. Teoh, et al. is directed to a neoprene article that is formed by dipping a former into a neoprene or neoprene copolymer latex. Certain types of anionic anti-tack agents are employed to reduce the tack of the article. In one embodiment, the neoprene latex-coated former is primed by dipping into dilute acid, rinsed and dried, and then dipped into a hydrogel latex. A surfactant material may then be applied to the article by tumbling in a solution. As

correctly noted by the Examiner, however, Teoh, et al. fails to disclose certain aspects of the present claims. For instance, Teoh, et al. fails to disclose the application of a lubricant coating containing a silicone emulsion to the outer surface of the substrate body while the inner surface of the substrate body remains adjacent to the hand-shaped former.

Nevertheless, the Office Action cited Chen in combination with Teoh, et al. in an attempt to render obvious claims 38, 55, and 65. Chen is directed to a process for making a powder-free glove that includes (i) dipping a former into a coagulant; (ii) dipping the former into an elastomer; (iii) dipping the former into an antiblocking composition; (iv) curing; and (v) dipping the former into a silicone emulsion. Once formed, the glove is then removed and inverted so that the first layer is on the outside of the glove. The glove is then treated with an acid to dissolve the acid-soluble powder, treated with a bleach (i.e., chlorinated), treated with a silicone emulsion, and dried. The Office Action asserted that it would have been obvious to use the silicone emulsion dip-coating step of Chen in Teoh, et al. because "maintaining the form on the former would provide an easy an uniform method of coating a lubricant onto a glove, and would also provide improved donnability."

However, the combination proposed in the Office Action is not supported by the teachings of the references. Teoh, et al. describes a "conventional" multi-dipping process that involves (i) dipping a former into a surfactant slurry, powder, and silicone; (ii) curing; (iii) stripping and inverting the glove; and (iv) chlorinating. However, as noted in Applicants' previous response, Teoh, et al. notes that this conventional multi-dipping process is "complicated" and "time-consuming", and has the "serious disadvantage of

requiring chlorination which is both expensive and can potentially have deleterious effects on the properties of the finished glove." (¶ 003). The invention of Teoh, et al. is said to avoid these significant disadvantages without resorting to the conventional method of chlorination. (*See e.g.*, ¶ 006). Notably, this disadvantageous, conventional process is similar to Chen, which also requires multiple complicated and time-consuming dipping steps, and even expressly requires chlorination.

The opposing teachings of Chen and Teoh, et al. do not end here. An essential feature of Teoh, et al. is the use of a hydrogel layer to reduce tackiness. In stark contrast, Chen expressly teaches away from elastomeric articles with such a construction, noting that they are not capable of achieving adequate donnability. (Col. 1, ll. 47-54). Thus, the express teachings of Teoh, et al. and Chen are clearly opposite and teach away from each other. For at least this reason, no objective motivation would have existed for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the references in the manner proposed in the Office Action.

The most recent Office Action, however, categorically dismissed the contradictory differences between Teoh, et al. and Chen on the basis that these "portions . . . were not relied upon in the rejection." Instead, the Office Action asserted that the references were combined "for different teachings." Applicants respectfully note that this is not the proper standard for rejecting a claim under *35 U.S.C. § 103*. A prior art reference *must be considered in its entirety*, i.e., as a whole, *including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention.*[1] Further, in determining the differences

[1] W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc., 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303 (Fed. Cir. 1983), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 851 (1984).

between the prior art and the claims, the appropriate question is not whether the differences themselves would have been obvious, but whether the claimed invention as a whole would have been obvious. In this particular case, Applicants submit that the vastly contradictory teachings of the references, when viewed in their entirety, would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the combination suggested in the Office Action.

Even if one were to ignore the vast differences between Teoh, et al. and Chen, however, no motivation would still have existed for modifying Teoh, et al. as suggested in the Office Action. For example, although Chen does include a step in which a silicone emulsion is dip-coated onto a glove layer, Chen itself teaches away from the use of this step. Namely, because subsequent processing may remove the silicone from the glove surface, Chen requires a second silicone treatment process after the glove is stripped. (Col. 4, ll. 45-54). In light of the above, one of ordinary skill in the art would simply not have selectively chosen the "pre-stripping" silicone dip-coating step for combination with Teoh, et al. as Chen itself indicates that the silicone applied in this step may be subsequently removed. If anything, one of ordinary skill in the art would have instead chosen the "post-stripping" silicone application step, as already described in Teoh, et al.

Nevertheless, even if somehow combined, the references would still fail to disclose each limitation of independent claims 77 and 98. That is, claims 77 and 98 require that the lubricant coating is applied to the "hydrogel-coated substrate body." In this manner, the hydrogel coating may block the surface of a tacky substrate body and prevent it from sticking to itself, while the lubricant coating may aid in damp donning. (*See e.g.*, Appl. p. 5). Such a method is nowhere taught in the cited references. Thus,

for at least the reasons set forth, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 77 and 99 patentably define over Teoh, et al. and Chen.

As a final note, the recent Office Action added a rejection of the previous claims based on U.S. Patent No. 5,965,276 to Schlenker in view of both Teoh, et al. and Chen. Namely, Schlenker was said to suggest the combination of a hydrogel and chlorination. However, this rejection fails for the same reasons noted above.

It is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, is therefore requested. Examiner Daniels is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully requested,

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Date: 11/27/06